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Reflection #2:

The literature review is a critical component of the research process because it both buttresses and orients the direction of the project. Without a solid understanding of what the problem is and how others have approached finding a resolution, a researcher would simply be grasping at the dark. While it is not entirely plausible or even necessary to propose a completely novel or unique vein of inquiry, it is only logical to immerse oneself within the topic in order to grapple with an educational challenge successfully.

A fundamental part of action research is collaborating with others. By conducting a large scale literature review or perhaps even through meta-analysis, a researcher is indirectly collaborating with professionals in the field who have already made significant contributions. In this case as in most others, reinventing the wheel is a dysfunctional approach to progress. Instead, knowing the stumbling blocks others have overcome means that our job can be made easier and having sound knowledge of what prior theorists have concluded serves as a lubricant in the process toward change. Peer reviewed or blind refereed journals are best when conducting a literature review, because they are held to the most rigorous of empirical and scientific standards.

In order for the focus of the project to be relevant, it is imperative that the researcher is aware of current instructional strategies. Without an understanding of what happens inside of a classroom, there is no room for pedagogical evolution. This means that the researcher should expect to visit a number of schools and decide where to implement their research in a concrete and tangible way using real students and new teaching methods.